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JFK Working Paper - Internal Use Only

3-23-98

Notes from meeting with ARRB staff, 20 March 1998.
re Board Issues (attendees Gunn, Skwirot, Combs)

I. **NEW ISSUE: Covert Actions** -- Document 178-10002-10415
[Rockfeller Commission document]

This document went before the Board in November as part of a group of documents from the Ford Presidential Library. It refers to Agency covert financial support in Peruvian, Greek, Finnish, Italian and Brazilian elections and support to labor union in France and Italy. The ARRB staff viewed the highlighted material (all references to covert action) as not germane to the assassination and had not anticipated a problem. The Board instead questioned the deletions and asked for more evidence before agreeing to protect. The sense of the staff is that the Board is leaning toward release. The DO team prepared a response for the staff in February, however, it is not strong enough to take to the Board.

Given that the next Board meeting is only 3 weeks away, we discussed a two step process:

1. At the 13 April meeting, have a senior official (Ed?) appear before the Board to a) underscore the importance of this issue to Agency and Intelligence Community; b) ask why these covert actions are important to the JFK assassination? They obviously have interest to historians but seem beyond the charter.

[Key points to make: this is not just Agency decision, NSC and/or WH will have to be consulted; the protection / classification has been has up-held by ...... (ISCAP?). If Ed went down, it would also serve as an opportunity to meet the other Board members. We could also make available to ARRB any material previously prepared defending protection of covert actions if appropriate.]

2. If the Board remains inclined to release, prepare full evidence package, etc. for May 12 meeting.

According to Gunn, there is no way to avoid sending this document to the Board. Once the Board has expressed an interest in an issue, they expect to see it again..

ACTION: We need to advise Gunn next week if we are going to have someone address the issue at the April meeting. If not, the document will be scheduled for action at the May meeting and our "evidence package" should be available for the ARRB staff no later than the week of May 4.

II. Alias documentation and accommodation addresses [Multiple documents -- I briefed you earlier on this issue].

ARRB staff proposed compromise:

Documentation (driver permits, SSN, membership cards, etc.)-

a. If documentation can be obtained by anyone (pocket litter: National Rife Association card, club memberships cards, etc.), the presumption will be to release.

b. If documentation would be expected to require agreement of another government entity (Federal, State or Local) or private company or organization, the presumption will be to protect.

c. Items that are considered by the ARRB staff to be important to the story, or that do not fall clearly into one of the above categories, will be considered on a case-by-case base. The Agency may be required to provide additional evidence to protect in these cases.

Accommodation Addresses:

Release as much of the address as possible without identifying a specific location or otherwise providing information that could lead to identification of an individual cooperating with the Agency. For example delete house number, release street.

Aliases [when true name is released]

If outside of the JFK timeframes (generally 1960-1964), the presumption is protect.

If within a JFK timeframe, presumption is to release; additional evidence will be required to protect.

Action: The HRP and DO JFK teams will re-review the documents applying the proposed compromise guidelines. If we conclude that the Agency's equities can be protected under this compromise, the ARRB staff will present the guidelines to the Board at the April meeting with the recommendation that the be adopted. The staff will describe the new guidelines as much preferable to the case-be-case approach which requires extensive research by the Agency consume an inordinate amount of staff time.